

## **Historic, Archive Document**

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.



521  
D24  
Reserve

# MANAGEMENT COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

U. S. Department of Agriculture  
NAT'L AGRIC. LIBRARY

A summary of significant events of  
interest to USDA management

Issue #79

April 10, 1978

APR 25 '78

FIRST CLASS AIR TRAVEL.....At the President's direction, GSA has published a regulation in the March 13, Federal Register which restricts approving authority and justifiable reasons for first-class air travel. Under the new regulation, only the Secretary or Deputy Secretary may approve first-class air travel. Approval may be given for the following reasons only:

1. Space is not available in coach class and the trip is so urgent that it cannot be postponed.
2. A handicapped employee needs first-class accommodations due to a severe impairment.
3. First-class accommodations are necessary for security reasons or because exceptional circumstances make their use essential to the success of an agency mission.
4. Lower class accommodations in a foreign carrier do not provide adequate health or sanitation standards.

First-class travel by carriers providing only one class service does not need Secretarial approval. (Contact: Frank Stidman, O&F, ext. 77251)

FLEXITIME IN USDA.....Flexitime continues to gain momentum in the Department. The latest survey shows that flexitime programs are operational on an experimental basis in ESCS, FS, FNS, and APHIS. ARS has now developed a program to implement in some of its locations and FAS has approved a plan that will go into effect with its reorganization. On April 10, the Office of Personnel and the Office of Governmental and Public Affairs will put their plans into operation.

Several other agencies are developing flexitime plans and will be submitting them to the Office of Personnel for approval.  
(Contact: Verna Deane Brown, OP, ext. 73185)

USDA BEATS GOVERNMENT AVERAGE IN WINNING BID PROTESTS.....In FY 1977, GAO issued 820 bid protest decisions. Of the 31 USDA decisions, 2 sustained the protestor and 29 denied the protest. Contractors won 17% of the 820 cases governmentwide, but only 6.5% of the USDA cases. On the time required to resolve protests, the governmentwide average was 80.9 days. The USDA average was 60.9.

The number of bid protests received by the Department appears to be stabilizing after a steady 5 year increase from 12 per year to 40 per year. The increase in protest volume appears to be primarily a sign of greater contractor awareness of protest procedures despite our high win rate.  
(Contact: Dean Smith, O&F, ext. 77525)

FEDERAL ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES OFFICERS GROUP (FASOG).....Ed Alvarez, Acting Associate Director, Office of Operations and Finance, was elected Chairman of FASOG, effective April 1978. Membership includes senior administrative services officers of Federal Departments. The group provides a medium for exchange of ideas, discussion of problems and development of techniques for management improvements and fostering a sense of professionalism covering the wide range of administrative services functions. (Contact: Ed Alvarez, O&F, ext. 73937)

PROPOSED FEDERAL ACQUISITION ACT OF 1977 (S. 1264).....The Act was reported out of the Committee on Governmental Affairs on March 22. This legislation will consolidate and modernize the two basic laws currently governing Federal procurement. It is designed to remove unduly restrictive regulatory requirements and to stimulate competition through new and innovative techniques. (Contact: Lacy Arnold, O&F, ext. 77525)

OMB CIRCULAR NO. A-111.....Responsibility for coordination and implementation of A-111 (Policies and Procedures for Administering Jointly Funded Assistance to State and Local Governments and Nonprofit Organizations) has been transferred to the Grants and Agreements Staff, O&F, from RDS. Departmental draft regulations are being reviewed for incorporation into Title 4 of the AR's. (Contact: Don Manns, O&F, ext. 72370)

#### BUDGET ITEMS.....

...Appropriation Hearings - Hearings on the 1979 Budget are nearing completion in both the House and the Senate. The House has only a couple of make-up sessions to be rescheduled and the Senate is expected to finish up by the middle of April. The House will probably mark-up the appropriation bill in early May.

...1980 Budget - Initial consideration of program issues leading toward policy guidance for the fiscal year 1980 budget is now underway. A draft of the 1980 agency estimates call memorandum has been distributed to the agencies for review and comment and agency responses were due March 31. The call memorandum will be issued in mid-April. OMB instructions (A-11) on submission of the 1980 budget estimates are not expected before mid-June.

(Contact: Bob Sherman, OBPE, ext. 76176)

#### LEGISLATIVE ITEMS.....

...Agricultural Act - On March 22, the House and Senate agreed to a conference to resolve the differences between their respective versions of H. R. 6782, Emergency Agricultural Act of 1978. Both versions provide for significant increases in the target prices on wheat, feed grains, and cotton. The Senate version incorporates the flexible parity provisions sponsored by Senator Dole.

...Agricultural Credit - On March 18, the House Agriculture Committee reported H. R. 11504, a bill to provide an economic emergency loan program for farmers, extend the Emergency Livestock Credit Act, and make certain improvements in the insured and guaranteed loan programs administered by FmHA.

...Civil Service - On March 13, the House passed H. R. 10126, to increase part-time career employment within the Civil Service.

(Contact: Al Duran, OBPE, ext. 74654)



FAIR HOUSING MONTH.....April marks the tenth anniversary of the Fair Housing Act (Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968), which prohibits discrimination based on race, color, sex, religion or national origin in the financing, sale or rental of housing. In USDA, Fair Housing Month will be marked by:

1. Department representation at ceremonies on Capitol Hill.
2. A picture exhibit on the fifth floor of the South Building along the Independence Avenue side.
3. Memoranda to employees from agency and office heads supporting the fair housing theme.
4. Department ceremonies dedicating integrated rural rental housing projects.

(Contact: William Payne, OEO, ext. 74806)

1890 COLLEGES.....Enrollment in agriculture and agricultural-related subjects at 1890 land grant colleges and universities rose from 1,273 to 1,860 between 1972 and 1977, an increase of 46 percent, according to a report prepared by Iowa State University. The figures do not include enrollment in veterinary medicine or home economics programs. The continued rise in agricultural-related enrollment in these schools is a reminder that they are a primary source of recruitment for employment in USDA agencies. Copies of this report are available.

(Contact: William Payne, OEO, ext. 74806)

MINORITY AND WOMEN PARTICIPATION ON ADVISORY COMMITTEES.....Minorities accounted for only 15 of the 365 members (4.1 percent) of USDA advisory committees at the end of February. Women accounted for only 32 of the members (8.8 percent). Department policy prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin in the selection of committee members. Agencies are reminded that all advisory committees are to have balanced membership including race, sex and national origin, to the extent practicable (7 CFR 25).

(Contact: William Payne, OEO, ext. 74806)

MINORITY PARTICIPATION IN RANGE MANAGEMENT GRAZING PROGRAM.....Minority participation in the Forest Service Range Management Grazing Program increased by 37 percent between 1975 and 1976 according to an evaluation report by the Office of Equal Opportunity. Minorities accounted for 5.8 percent of all users and 7.2 percent of all the livestock grazed under the program. (Contact: Fred Hazelwood, OEO, ext. 74564)

#### EEO ITEMS.....

...Hispanic Employment Program - The title of the Spanish Speaking Program has been changed to the Hispanic Employment Program. The new title will more fully reflect the nature of the goals and objectives of the program to ensure EEO affirmative action for Americans of Spanish origin.

...Federal Personnel Manual 713 - Effective April 10, Subpart 6 is added to FPM 173 to cover allegations of discrimination because of a physical or mental handicap.

...Departmental EEO Committee Meeting - Ms. A. Diane Graham, the new Director of the Office of Federal Equal Employment Opportunity in the Civil Service Commission will speak at the meeting on April 14.

(Contact: Gloria F. Torres, OP, ext. 72973)

FLEXITIME BILL.....A bill to allow the Federal government to experiment with flexitime work schedules has lost its first round but may be reviewed. The House voted 242-141 in favor of the measure, but it lost by 14 votes because it was considered under a special procedure requiring approval by a two-thirds margin.

The legislation can be reconsidered under normal procedures where it would require only a majority vote for passage.

The bill would establish a three year, experimental program allowing Federal agencies to try out a four-day work week, varied hours and days of employment, and a system allowing a worker to choose his time of arrival and departure.

To permit this experiment, the bill would suspend application of laws regarding work hours, overtime pay, compensatory time off, premium pay for night work and work on holidays.

Limited experiments are already being conducted by 13 of the 14 Federal departments and 17 of the 59 Federal agencies. (Contact: Neil I. Van Vliet, Management Staff, ext. 76111)

NEW ADDRESS?.....If your organization designation, title or address have changed, please let us know. It is important that we maintain an accurate, up-to-date listing to insure that you receive your Newsletter every month. Just call us on 76111 to make the changes.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINES.....Deadlines for submitting articles and publication dates for the remainder of 1978 are as follows:

<u>Deadline for Articles</u>		<u>Publication Date</u>	
May	10	May	15
June	7	June	12
July	5	July	10
August	9	August	14
September	6	September	11
October	11	October	16
November	8	November	13
December	6	December	11

Please remember that this Newsletter is published for your benefit. The value to you is a direct function of the material submitted. Send your articles to Neil I. Van Vliet, room 115-A, ext. 76111.